

BETWEEN THE BROAD DAYLIGHT AND THE SHADOW: METAMORPHOSES OF THE BAKHTIAR TALE IN PERSIAN AND MALAY¹

Vladimir Braginsky
vibraginsky@hotmail.com

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS),
University of London,
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square,
London WC1H 0XG, UNITED KINGDOM.

Abstract

Barthes defined the literary text as “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture”. Developing this statement, we can postulate two forms of existence of the literary text. On the one hand, it may exist as a holistic entity in which all components are interlinked so that they can bear an integral meaning. This is a “syntagmatic” existence of the literary work as a “tissue”, or a certain structure. On the other hand, the literary text may exist as a destructuralised set of the same components isolated from each other—its “paradigmatic” existence as a sum total of quotations that contribute to the all-embracing repository of “quotations”, which makes up the intertext of a particular literature. This intertext provides “building blocks” for the construction of new literary pieces. In this article I shall discuss the two forms of existence of literary works on the basis of one piece of Persian literature translated into Malay. The example chosen is *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (Tale of Bakhtiar), and its transformations and diverse literary constructions that were built of “quotations” from it over more than two centuries. This discussion, among other things, will help us to explain the strong Persian influence on Malay traditional literature, despite the relatively small number of Persian writings translated into Malay.

Keywords: traditional Malay literature, persian influence, *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, quotation, recension, intertext, *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*, *Syair Bidasari*

INTRODUCTION

In his stimulating study of *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* (Tale of Merong Mahawangsa), H. Maier (1985:1) once again drew the attention of the reader to R. Barthes's definition of the literary text as "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1998:121). Applied by Barthes to any literary text, this definition reveals with particular precision the essence of the text in traditional literatures, of which traditional Malay literature is one. Barthes's definition prompts the researcher to spare a second thought to a number of significant aspects of the ontology of literature, primarily to the forms of existence of the literary text. On the one hand, any piece of a particular literature can exist as a holistic entity, all the components of which (narrative units, or "quanta", of various kinds, deliberations of the author and his characters, aphoristic sayings, descriptive motifs and so forth) are arranged and interlinked with each other, so that they can bear a certain integral meaning. This is a "syntagmatic" existence of the literary work per se, its existence in the form of a tissue, that is, a certain structure. This is how it was intended by its author, and this is how it exists in the "broad daylight", so to speak.

On the other hand, the piece of literature can exist as a destructuralised set of the same components isolated from each other. This is its "paradigmatic" existence in the form of a repository of quotations, or rather its contribution to the all-embracing repository of quotations in a particular literature. In this form the piece not infrequently crosses the minds of the reader and of the author's brothers-in-penmanship in various circumstances of their lives or creative process. This is its "shadow" existence.

Pertinently, Barthes's definition seems to demand that the notion of "quotation" be broadened, so that it can include not only precise reproductions of verbal segments from the text quoted, but also more or less exact imitations of all its narrative, descriptive, and rhetorical components as well as the patterns of their arrangement. With the term "quotation" understood in this manner, their above-mentioned repository, enriched by every new work as soon as its components begin to be reproduced ("quoted"), is none other than the literary intertext. The literary intertext not only provides the writer with the quotations serving as "building blocks" to construct his work, but

also allows him, by means of their recombination and re-shaping, to express new intended meanings. Moreover, as the quotations are shrouded in an associative aura, the writer can express this meaning through allusions and hints to or indirect literary polemics with the original. Therefore, as “a tissue”, or a structural unity, of “quotations” the work exists actually in the space between the author/reader and the text. At the same time, as “a repository of quotations”, it exists potentially in the space between the author/reader and the intertext. This potential existence is ready to bring forth new pieces of literature and to become the frame of reference that will ensure their understanding.

All this is applicable not only to original works of a particular literature, but also to foreign writings, which this literature has appropriated via the translation. Malay translations of literary works originating from one of the “centres of culture”, the Persian-speaking world, seem to be instructive in this respect. Paradoxically enough, despite the fairly small number of Persian writings translated into Malay, the Persian influence on all the aspects of Malay literature is impressive.

In this paper I shall discuss two forms of existence of literary works on the basis of one piece of Persian literature translated into Malay. The example chosen is *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (Tale of Bakhtiar), its transformations and diverse literary constructions that were built of “quotations” from it over more than two centuries. This discussion, among other things, will help us to explain the above-mentioned paradox.

BAKHTIYAR-NAMA AND ITS MALAY TRANSLATION: THE PERSIAN RECENSION OF *HIKAYAT BAKHTIAR*

The Malay framed narrative (*hikayat berbingkai*) of Bakhtiar, which is extant in three different recensions, is traceable to a group of Persian literary works telling of the Prince Bakhtiyar (so his name is spelled in Persian). The framing tale of this work runs as follows. Left by his royal parents in a desert, he was found and adopted by a gang of robbers and then rescued by a merchant who once brought him to the presence of the King Azadbakht, his father. Azadbakht does not recognize his son and, captivated by his appearance and good manners, accepts him into his service. Soon, thanks to his wisdom, the youth reaches a high position at the court. The king's viziers envy Bakhtiyar, accuse him of an affair with the queen and insist on his execution. To postpone it, Bakhtiyar tells the king nine stories inserted in the framing tale. All of them narrate the damage that hasty decisions and the

listening to slanderers can cause. In the end the chief of the robbers comes to Azadbakht, and the mystery of Bakhtiyar's birth is revealed.

The earliest and the only one rhetorically embellished version of the Bakhtiyar tale, which meets the requirements of courtly Persian prose, is *Rahat al-arwah* (Delight for Souls) written in the early thirteenth century in Samarqand by the poet and adib Shams al-Din Muhammad Daqa'iqi (Osmanov, 1977:165-66).² However, the narrative of Bakhtiyar was spread much broader in its unembellished, popular version usually entitled Bakhtiyar-nama, which has been repeatedly published (Kazimirski, 1839, Berthels, 1926) and translated into English and French (Ouseley, 1883,³ Lescallier, 1805). It is precisely this version that is found in popular manuscripts in Persian, both composite and containing Bakhtiyar-nama alone, which are mostly Indian and Central Asian in provenance. According to Nöldeke (1891), characteristic for this version are not only a number of peculiar features of the content, but also the specific succession of inserted stories (see Table 1). It is the latter that clearly differentiate the popular version of Bakhtiyar-nama from both its Arabic counterpart and *Rahat al-arwah*.⁴

When exactly this specific succession emerged is not altogether clear. Discussing the popular Bakhtiyar-nama, Ouseley remarks that he does not know its manuscripts which are "much older than the end of the seventeenth century" (Ouseley, 1883:xli). This date may, however, be established with a somewhat higher accuracy. An examination of the St. Petersburg composite manuscript B 256 (Tumanovich, 1981:39-40) including, inter alia, Bakhtiyar-nama shows that this manuscript is virtually identical to the manuscripts India Office 797 (Ethe, 1903-1937, I:col. 524-26) and Asiatic Society of Bengal 301 (Ivanow, 1924:130-31). All the three consist of the one and the same works that follow in one and the same order. Therefore, they may well derive from a common archetype. Considering that some works in the manuscript India Office 797 have already been copied in 1616-1619, and the whole manuscript dates from 1636, this archetype must have existed in the beginning of the seventeenth century, if not earlier. With all this in mind, the popular version of Bakhtiyar-nama can be dated back to the end of the sixteenth-the early seventeenth century at the latest.

Turning to the examination of the Malay version of the Bakhtiyar tale, we can remark that already Brandes (1895:201, 218-19, 229) drew attention to the fact that six stories making up the concluding section of the Malay "Kalila and Dimina" were traceable to Bakhtiyar-nama. He also established that one of the manuscripts from Van der Tuuk's collection (now Cod.Or.

3197 [1]) contained the Malay translation of all the nine stories of *Bakhtiyar-nama*, which followed in the characteristic succession of the latter (Juynboll, 1899:155; Iskandar, 1999, I:107-08). The ideas of Brandes were further developed by Voorhoeve (1933) who identified two more manuscripts of the “Persian recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (now Cod.Or. 6069 and Cod.Or. 12.201, see Iskandar 1999, I:294, 642-43).⁵ Comparative data on Persian and Malay prose versions of the *Bakhtiyar* tale are summed up in the Table 1.

The date of the Malay translation of *Bakhtiyar-nama* is also unknown. However, it is likely that precisely this translation is mentioned two times in the old list of St. Martin’s manuscripts (No 22, 61) as “de historie van den persiaansen koningh Isbaah (No 61 Asbaah), maleits” – “the story of the Persian King Asbah in Malay” (Haan, 1900:299, 301).

According to Winstedt (1991:88) and many Malayists after him, *Hikayat Raja (Ajami) Asbah* is the Malay translation of the Arabic, not the Persian, version of the *Bakhtiyar* tale. Winstedt found this title in the list of Malay works published by Werndly in 1736. Since, just as Brandes before, he realised the difference between the Arabic and the Persian version (Brandes, 1891, 1895), Winstedt identified *Hikayat Raja Asbah* with *Hikayat Ghulam*, which had actually been translated from Arabic.⁶ However, we read in *Hikayat Ghulam* that its original, once belonging to Habib Syaikh b. ‘Alawi Saqqaf, has later been translated into Malay “by the learned Haji Abdulwahab of Siantan in Riau” whose “grave is on the isle of Penyengat” (Wieringa, 1998:69-70). P. Carey (1979:88) adduces convincing proofs that witness to the fact that both Habib Syaikh b. ‘Alawi Saqqaf and Haji Abdulwahab lived in Riau in the early nineteenth century. For this reason, the work translated by Haji Abdulwahab could by no means be mentioned either in the list of St. Martin or in the list of Werndly.

As St. Martin collected Malay manuscripts between the 1670s-1690s, we can assume that the “Persian recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* appeared not later than in those decades and most probably earlier. Interestingly, all the three manuscripts of the “Persian recension” originate from Sumatra, and one of them (Cod.Or.3197[1]) from Barus, an old centre of Malay-Persian contacts.

The comparison of the popular Persian and Malay versions of the *Bakhtiyar* tale, which reveal their considerable similarity, shows, by and large, the features common for translations from Persian into Malay in general, for instance, for *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, the translation of Persian *Tuti-nama* (Book of the Parrot; see Braginsky, 2009:83-85). Like in *Hikayat*

Table 1 The Persian versions vs the Malay version.

Stories	Persian versions: <i>Rahat al-arwah</i> by Daqa'iqi and <i>Bakhtiyar-nama</i>				The Malay version: <i>Hikayat Bakhtiar</i> (the "Persian recension")	
	Ornate	Popular				
	Daqa'iqi	Ouseley 1883; Kazimirski 1839; Lescallier 1805; Berthels 1926	India Office 797, 26, 36-437	St. Petersburg A100.1; B256.41; B4496, 17; C1839	Leiden Cod.Or. 3197; 6069; 12.201	<i>Kalila dan Damina</i> (Cod. Or.3195; Gonggr-ijp 1892
The unlucky merchant	2	2	2	2	2	3
Bahzad (or Bihzad), the impatient prince	6	3	3	3	3	2
Abu Sabar (or Sabir), the patient man	4	4	4	4	4	4
The king of Yemen (or Behkard) and his slave	7	5	5	5	5	5
The king who killed his two viziers (or the story of Dadbin [Mal. Dadaim])	9	6	6	6	6	6

Stories	Persian versions: <i>Rahat al-arwah</i> by Daqa'iqi and <i>Bakhtiyar-nama</i>				The Malay version: <i>Hikayat Bakhtiar</i> (the "Persian recension")	
	Ornate	Popular				
The queen and her son of the previous marriage (or the story of the king of Abyssinia)	8	7	7	7	7(7a ⁸)	7a
The jeweller (or merchant) who drowns his sons (or the story of Hasan Malik Ceti)	3	8	8	8	8	8
The story of Abu Tamam	5	9	9	9	9	-
The prince who grows up in a cave (or the story of the king of Persia [or Hijaz])	10	10	10	10	10	-

Bayan Budiman, here too, a greater part of the rendering represents a detailed retelling of the Persian source text in idiomatic Malay, interspersed with more or less accurate translations of some sentences and sentence-by-sentence paraphrases. Here is a characteristic example from the story about the impatient Prince Bihzad (Mal. Bahzada).

Ouseley 1883:34-35

It happened once that, being seated with several of his companions, he (the Prince Bihzad; V.B.) desired one of them to relate his adventures. The young man accordingly began his story in the following words: "About two years ago, being in possession of considerable wealth, I purchased several beasts of burthen (=burden) and, having loaded them with various commodities, I undertook a journey, but on the way was attacked by robbers, who plundered me of all my property, and I proceeded with a disconsolate heart until night came on and I found myself in a place without any vestige of inhabitants. I took shelter beneath a great tree and had remained there for some time, when I perceived a light and several persons who passed by with much festivity and mirth. After them came some who held vessels full of burning incense so very fragrant that the desert was perfumed by its delightful odour. When they had passed on, a magnificent litter appeared, and the curtains of the litter were thrown back, before which walked several damsels holding torches scented with ambergris. In this litter was seated a fair one of such exquisite beauty that the radiance of her charms far exceeded the light of the torches and quite dazzled my fascinated eyes [...].

Gonggrijp 1892:308-309

Once Prince Bahzada was seated in front of his father's ministers, talking to them. A king's herald said to him: "There is a certain story. If your slave tells it, Your Highness will surely enjoy listening to it" The Prince Bahzada said: "Tell me this story, so that I can listen to it." And the herald began to tell respectfully: "One day, three years ago, I decided to set off on a trading journey to Egypt. However, when I was halfway to Syria, I was suddenly attacked by the Bedouins who plundered me of all my possessions. Being left all alone, I had to pass the night in the forest. Some time later, I heard human voices, which sounded deafeningly, just as it happens in the time of royal pageants. Then I saw a great multitude of people with diverse musical instruments and, stricken with fear, hid myself in a [sheltered] place. From there I could see people who carried on their heads many trays full of spikenard, and camphor, and ambergris. When people with musical instruments had passed by, I saw innumerable Chinese lanterns of most diverse shapes, their shining as bright as if the day had come. At that time there appeared people who carried a litter with the throne adorned with all kinds of jewels and surrounded by lantern-bearers. On that throne was seated a princess, her countenance of exquisite beauty spreading around radiance. She wore full set of ornaments of pure gold studded with resplendent gems.

The next morning I proceeded on my journey and arrived at the city of Rum, the capital and residence of the Kaisar, and having made inquiries, I was informed that the beautiful damsel whom I had seen was the Princess Nigarin, daughter of the Kaisar, who had a villa at a little distance from the city, to which she sometimes went for recreation.”

And I begin to cry, remembering Your Highness. The next morning I asked a wayfarer on the road along which that pageant had passed: ‘Who was the one who had proceeded here last night, accompanied by many thousands of retainers?’ He replied: ‘That was the daughter of the king of Rum?’ I asked: ‘And where to was she going?’ He replied: ‘She was going to amuse herself in the flower garden. In that garden there are a princess’s bower with a pond and all kinds of toys and entertainments. It is precisely there that she was going for recreation.’”

In spite of the fact that the Malay translation is relatively close to the Persian original, a number of details that occur in the latter are substituted in *Hikayat Bakhtiar* for those which are more familiar to the Malay readership. A desert is replaced by the jungle, a lion by a tiger, this tiger is a threat not to peasants, but to water-buffaloes, in the fields, and so on (all the examples from story 4, see Table 1). At the sight of a beautiful princess, Bahzada addresses her in his thoughts with traditional Malay endearments: “O my lady, O the breath of my life (*nyawa*), O the skull of my head (*batu kepala*), O my royal beloved (*junjungan makota*)! Look at me, if only from the corner of your lovely eyes” (Gonggrijp, 1892:320).

In comparison with the source text, in the “Persian recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* both the number of dialogues and a degree of dramatization of the text are on the increase, just as it happens in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*. However, in the Bakhtiar story it is not so much an artistic as a ceremonial dramatization (about it, see Bausani, 1979:44-45), supplemented with frequent repetitions that allow the translator to retell one and the same episode again and again. For instance, in the story of the unlucky merchant, the protagonist who is accused of stealing the pearls is first brought to be prosecuted by a minister. On listening the sides, the minister brings him before the king. The king gives orders to a council of ministers to investigate the case. They arrange a meeting, discuss the case and then go home. Finally the king knows the truth from the pearl divers and summons the merchant to the palace again (Gonggrijp, 1892:325-30). An attempt of Bahzada to marry the princess of Rum is described in a similar way. First Amir Mahmud, the prince’s patron,

goes to the king as his matchmaker. The king listens to him, they have a meal together and Amir Mahmud returns home. After that Bahzada himself pays a visit to the king and everything repeats once more (*Ibid.*:317-19). These ceremonial scenes, well known to any student of Malay literature, are lacking in the Persian work in which in both cases the protagonist goes (or is brought) directly to the king who decides his fate without delay (Ouseley, 1883:29-30, 41). As a result, deviations from the Persian original which seem to be considerable, more often than not add little new information, even if they indigenise the Malay translation to some extent.

DEEPER INTO THE SHADOWS: FROM THE “PERSIAN RECENSION” TO THE “PSEUDO-HIKAYAT BAKHTIAR”

The era of the translation of Persian writings into Malay had largely come to an end by the mid-seventeenth century. However, as *Hikayat Bakhtiar* shows, their metamorphoses, now in the framework of traditional Malay literature, do not finish here. Two other recensions of the Bakhtiar narrative provide us with a good example of how substantially Malay literature could transform Persian framed tales. These recensions are so different from the Persian original and its Malay translation discussed above that Voorhoeve (1933:429) defines them as pseudo-*Hikayat Bakhtiar*. The first, “short recension” (Von Dewall, 1880; Djamaris, 1978), which, according to Winstedt (1991:429), belongs to the Johor-Riau literary school, may have been composed in the first third of the seventeenth century. However that may have been, it most probably predates the second, “long recension”, since we find in the latter two stories specific for the “short recension”.

Similarity between the “short” recension and the Persian Bakhtiyar-nama is limited to their framing story. Yet, conspicuous differences can be observed even there. In the “short recension”, a king, Bakhtiar’s father, has to leave his homeland in order to avoid the bloodshed, which the uprising of his younger brother may provoke; in his subsequent wanderings a sagacious elephant chooses him to be the ruler of another country. In the Persian work, the king is defeated by his rebel army commander and regains the throne of the same country shortly, no sagacious elephant is mentioned. The newly born Bakhtiar is abandoned in the jungle, not in the desert like in Bakhtiyar-nama, and is adopted and later brought to the king by a merchant named Idris, not by robbers. Accordingly, Idris and not the head of the robbers reveals the mystery of Bakhtiar’s birth to the king, his father. There are also some other details, specific for this Malay recension.

The “short recension” includes only four (sometimes five) stories told to the king by Bakhtiar caluminated by viziers, none of which is encountered in the Persian work.⁹ At the same time, like in *Bakhtiyar-nama*, the connection between the framing tale and inserted stories is quite organic in the “short recension”, which adds unity to the entire piece. The mixture of ideas characteristic of both the Malay and the Persian work (the impermanence of life, the necessity of taking time to make well-thought-out decisions, the impermissibility of paying attention to the lies of courtiers, and the eventual triumph of justice) is expressed in all parts of the *hikayat*, echoing one another by association and highlighting various aspects of its theme in turn (Braginsky, 2004:429). The framing tale itself, with its motifs of unjust banishment of the king, ordeals that fell to the runaway’s lot, his ascension to the throne and triumph over his brother (who eventually repented), suggests an outline of Bakhtiar’s fate. Then follow stories about the punishment of viziers who tried to calumniate innocent people and, finally, the fourth inserted story similar to *Hikayat Maharaja Puspa Wiraja* (1900), Indian (or Thai) in origin, which not only condemns hasty decisions but also describes events highly reminiscent of the story of Bakhtiar himself and his father, their separation and reunion. This story logically precedes the final episode of the *hikayat*: the recognition of his son by the king.

In spite of the coincidence of two inserted stories,¹⁰ the “long recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (Brandes, 1895; Baharudin, 1963) is quite different from the “short recension” both in its content and structure. The date of its composition is unknown but, judging from the sources used by its author (Goriaeva, 1990:149-52), in particular *Bustan al-Salatin* by Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri (composed between 1638 and 1641), it hardly appeared before the second half of the seventeenth century.

The “long recension” resembles its Persian prototype (and even the framing story of the latter!) no more than the “short recension”. It begins with the episode telling of the just king of Turkestan who is attacked by the cruel ruler of a neighbouring country; the defeated just king and his wife have to flee into the jungle, where the queen gives birth to Bakhtiar. Then pestilence destroys the tyrant’s army and the king of Turkestan ascends his throne again. The shepherd Rasdas (neither the head of robbers, nor the merchant Idris) adopts Bakhtiar and brings him to his father’s court. The envious vizier slanders Bakhtiar and, hoping that his innocence will be established over time, the youth tells the king not five or nine, but sixty-seven or even one hundred and five (Voorhoeve, 1969:374-75) stories, of

which a considerable part are borrowed from *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* (18 stories), the edifying mirrors *Taj al-Salatin* and *Bustan al-Salatin* (no less than 28), the Qur'an and hadith.¹¹

Thus, contrary to the “short recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, its “long recension” represents not a compact, harmoniously constructed literary work, but a voluminous edifying mirror for kings, touching upon a wide range of themes (primarily, the theme of just and unjust rule). The role of the framing tale is reduced to the minimum: it is turned into no more than an instrument for arranging the most heterogeneous material. Sometimes the ruler seems to be totally oblivious of the reason why Bakhtiar has been brought to him from the jail and begins to ask him about this or that aspect of correct behaviour. These questions somewhat resemble headings of thematic sections in real edifying mirrors.

PRESERVED IN THE SHADOW TO RETURN TO THE DAYLIGHT; “QUOTATIONS” FROM *HIKAYAT BAKHTIAR* AS “BUILDING BLOCKS” FOR NEW COMPOSITIONS

Three above-mentioned recensions of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* preserve at least the structure and key-elements of the Persian source text, namely, a semblance of its framing tale and the motif of Bakhtiar's telling stories to prove his innocence and save his life. Yet, as we have seen, even these key-elements are drastically changed in Malay renderings of Bakhtiyar-nama. However, there is more to it than that. Having been appropriated by the intertext of traditional Malay literature, constituent parts of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* entered a number of Malay works as “quotations” in the sense of this word defined at the beginning of our paper.

Probably the earliest of these “quotations” occurs in *Hikayat Indraputra* (Tale of Indraputra, the late sixteenth-early seventeenth century), which includes an episode about perfidious viziers who envy the hero and, having falsely accused him of adultery with a woman from the sultan's harem, insist on his execution (Mulyadi, 1983:168-70). This episode may originate from the framing story of Bakhtiyar-nama or the “Persian recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*. More skilfully, however, the motifs of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* are used in two literary pieces of the second half of the eighteenth century: *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* (Tale of Maharaja Ali; Mohd. Yusuf, 1989:83-105) and *Syair Bidasari* (*Poem of Bidasari*, Van Hoëvell, 1843), perhaps of the Palembang provenance (Braginsky, 2004:404-05, 506, 512; Iskandar, 1995:477-78).

HIKAYAT MAHARAJA ALI

Hikayat Maharaja Ali narrates the misadventures of the King Maharaja Ali, the ruler of a country named Badagra, and his faithful wife Hasinan, their trials and tribulations, the separation and reunion of the spouses and their accession to the throne (for a detailed analysis of the work, see Braginsky, 2004:404-15). One of the main sources of *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* is *Hikayat Bakhtiar* or, to be more exact, both its “long” and “short” recensions.

Like in the “short recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, in the beginning of the tale Maharaja Ali voluntarily leaves his country to deliver his people from calamities (now caused not by the uprising of the ruler’s brother, but by his elder son’s outrages) and wanders with his wife and children in the jungle for a long time. As with the case of the family of a king from story 4 of the “short recension” (Djamaris, 1978:64-71),¹² the family of Maharaja Ali disperses during their wanderings. He perishes (to be revived later by Nabi Isa and to come to the throne of Badagra again), and Hasinan is taken captive by an evil king Raja Serdala. Echoes of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* are easily discernible in the latter episode too. Like Bakhtiar, Hasinan is brought to Raja Serdala’s palace and is threatened with death.¹³ Both heroes tell stories, hinting at certain events in their lives to avoid death. Like Bakhtiar’s, Hasinan’s story also ends in moralizing.

The analysis of the episode in Serdala’s palace, i.e., when Hasinan tells the inserted story, in the context of the entire story of Hasinan, allows us to understand why it develops in this particular way. The author of *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* opposes the theme of a faithful wife to the theme of female infidelity and wiliness, so popular in various Persian stories generally and in their Malay counterparts in particular. It is almost beyond doubt that the main source of the story of Hasinan is the didactic tale about a husband who so loved his wife that he gave half his lifetime for her to be raised from the dead, after which she immediately betrayed him. This story is found in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* (Winstedt, 1920:134-39), but the version of it used in *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*, in which the wife is recalled to life by the Prophet Isa’s prayer to Allah, first appears in *Bustan al-Salatin* (“Story of Abdullah Jauhari” is meant).¹⁴ It is from there that it penetrated the “long recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (Brandes, 1895:262-65).

That the author of *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* alludes specifically to this story from *Hikayat Bakhtiar* becomes obvious, when we compare the whole story of Hasinan with it. In both we find an identical set of motifs, but in the

story of Hasinan the implication of these motifs is reversed, and the fates of Abdullah's wife and of Hasinan are, correspondingly, mutually opposed:

Hikayat Maharaja Ali

The husband and the wife love each other very much.

The husband dies.

The Prophet Isa revives the husband.

Because of her love for her husband, the wife finds herself in Raja Serdala's palace and enters into conversation with him.

Serdala urges the woman to marry him.

The wife remains faithful to her husband.

Raja Serdala goes to Badagra with his retinue; the wife accompanies him.

The husband meets his wife but does not recognise her.

The wife is unjustly accused of infidelity.

Matters are cleared up, and the wife's innocence is established.

The husband is reunited with his wife forever.

The wife ascends the throne with honour.

Story of Abdullah Jauhari

The husband and the wife pledge eternal love.

The wife dies.

The Prophet Isa revives the wife.

Because of her lack of love for her husband, the wife enters into conversation with the king of Egypt.

The king of Egypt urges the woman to marry him.

The wife betrays her husband (and even requests that he be killed).

The king of Egypt goes for an outing; the wife accompanies him.

The husband meets his wife and does recognise her.

The wife is justly accused of infidelity.

Matters are cleared up, and the wife's infidelity is established.

The husband rejects his wife forever (takes back the half of his life-span that he gave her).

The wife dies in disgrace.

The echo of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* is heard particularly clearly in the concluding part of *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*. Ignoring the story told by Hasinan, Raja Serdala is ready to resort to force, but Allah smites him with paralysis. In the meantime, Maharaja Ali becomes the ruler of Badagra again and Allah endows him with the miraculous powers of a healer. His two sons, who have been lost in the jungle, come to the palace to beg for money. Maharaja Ali fails to recognize them and makes them his pages. The fame of Maharaja Ali's healing powers reaches Raja Serdala. Wishing to be cured, he sails to Badagra in the company of Hasinan. Maharaja Ali sends his two pages to the

boat to take care of Raja Serdala's alleged spouse. Hasinan recognizes her sons and kisses and embraces them. Maharaja Ali, who sees this as adultery, is enraged and orders the execution of the pages. His servants take them to the jail, but the executioner postpones the execution. It transpires from the boys' conversation that the executioner is their third brother, and in the morning he takes them back to the palace. The situation is cleared up, Hasinan proves that she is Maharaja Ali's wife, and the family is happily reunited.

A greater part of this episode: the coming of the king's sons to the palace; their appointment as pages by the king who fails to recognize them; the meeting of the sons with their mother; the accusation of adultery and the execution that threatens the princes; and finally, the recognition of his spouse by the king – is borrowed from the above-mentioned story 4 from *Hikayat Bakhtiar*'s "short recension". At the same time, the author of *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*, with his liberal manner of dealing with sources, has fused the concluding part of the story with the finale of story 20 from *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* (Winstedt, 1920: 144-63). This story tells of a virtuous Siti Hasanah (cf. Hasinan), upon whose chastity several men have unsuccessfully made attempts. In the end, in the guise of man, she becomes the "king" of a certain country, famous not only for "his" justice, but also for "his" healing powers. Hasanah's husband and her assailants stricken by different diseases sail off to the country of the "king" the healer. The "king" demands that each of them should confess the cause of his disease. Then she forgives and heals them and reveals herself to her husband.

Although in agreement with the edifying message of *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*, it is the king who acts as a healer there, and his wife, whose faithfulness is put to the last test, sails to his country, whereas in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* the whole situation is reversed. Similarity between the two stories is obvious. All the more so, as in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* the heroine appears disguised as man (king), while the motif of the mutual recognition of spouses in *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* again derives from story 4 of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*.

SYAIR BIDASARI

Elements of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, which are elegantly entwined in the tissue of *Syair Bidasari* (Van Hoëvell, 1843; Millie 2004), once again reveal a fusion of the "short" and "long" recensions of the Bakhtiar tale. These elements enter the text of the poem not so much through the direct "quoting" of particular verbal segments, as by means of more indirect methods. One of them is a

permeation of the *syair* with echoes of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* that amplify the sound of its major themes, another is a reproduction of the *hikayat*'s narrational patterns, sometimes with individual motifs of this *hikayat* "attached" to them. Like *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, *Syair Bidasari* begins with a narrative about the attack of a foe on the country of a king, the father of the heroine. This puts him and his pregnant wife to flight into the jungle. This time, however, the foe is not the evil king of the neighbouring country or the king's rebellious brother, but the fantastical bird *Garuda*. Just as in *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, in the jungle the queen gives birth to a baby of incomparable beauty, now not a prince, however, but a princess. This episode of the spouses' wanderings and the birth of the baby is a rare example of a very close verbal similarity between *Syair Bidasari* and the "long recension" of the *hikayat*.

After that, as in the "short recension" of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, a merchant finds the baby (*Bidasari*) in the jungle and adopts her. The poem, again like the *hikayat*, finishes by the revealing of Bidasari's royal origin, her meeting with her father, and the enthronement.

However, the similarity between *Syair Bidasari* and *Hikayat Bakhtiar* cannot be reduced to the coincidence of this "frame" of the narrative, since it runs through the very core of the meaning and message of the poem. Bakhtiar who is brought up in the house of his foster-father, a merchant, acquires the main merit of a man, which, according to the tradition, is wisdom. Bidasari, who is also brought up in the house of her foster-father, a merchant, grows up to become not only a kind and good-natured girl, but also as a maiden endowed with the main merit of a woman, which is beauty. Then the merchant brings Bakhtiar to the palace. In the case of Bidasari, the merchant allows her to go to the palace. The king's viziers (headed by Tahkim) envy Bakhtiar's wisdom and try to destroy him. The king's spouse (Lelasari) envies Bidasari's beauty and tries to destroy her. The viziers unfairly accuse Bakhtiar of making sexual advances to the queen; because of their calumny he is shut up in the prison, where he is threatened with death. Lelasari unfairly accuses Bidasari of making sexual advances to the king (the girl allegedly desires to become his wife and even to kill Lelasari to achieve her goal); Bidasari is shut up in a dark room, where she is threatened by death from starvation and beating. In order to save his life, Bakhtiar tells a series of stories to the king. For the same reason, Bidasari tells Lelasari the story of a fish of gold, in which her life spirit (*nyawa*) resides: she will die (in fact, fall asleep), if at some particular time Lelasari takes the fish out of the box, wears it as a pendant around her neck and then puts it back in the box (Van Hoëvell, 1843:38-39).

Hikayat Bakhtiar

(Baharudin, 1963:122-25)

The king led his wife by the hand, and they went on slowly, stopping after every one or two steps. [Then the king] forced his wife to go on again. Some time later they came to a mere, no bigger than a pool, but with clear and pellucid water. There was a spreading tree [...] near the mere, and under the tree lay a flat black stone. And the king of Turkisna with his wife stopped under that tree [to have a rest] and sat on the flat stone. That night the moon was shining so brightly [that one could think] it was daytime. The queen suffered from severe stomach-pains, as she was about to give birth to her baby, and the king, full of anxiety for his wife in labour [...], held her head on his lap. The dawn had almost broken. The gentle breeze began to blow. Wild cocks of the jungle started crow and answer one another loudly. Their crows mixed with the cries of peacocks in the *beraksa* tree,¹⁵ whose voices sounded like those of people greeting the queen [...] Daybreak¹⁶ began to glimmer at the edge of the sky, and clouds were drifting hither and thither driven by the breeze. At that time the queen gave birth to her son, whose face of incomparable beauty was shining and radiant as newly burnished gold.¹⁷

Syair Bidasari

(Van Hoëvell 1843:3-4)

The sultan went on with his wife,
 Leading her by the hand;
 They were looking for the bank of the river,
 [But, tired,] had to stop after every two steps.
 When the sultan reached the river bank,
 He saw a boat in front of him,
 With a deck and a cabin in the stern,
 "Have a rest" [he said,] "let your legs hang
 down".
 That was the night of the full moon,
 Which poured its radiance all around;
 The queen was exhausted because of birth pangs,
 And the sultan looked at her with compassion.
 Bright was the moon on its fourteenth night,
 At three in the morning it began to dawn;
 The face of the sultan also brightened
 With great compassion for his wife in pain.
 The gentle breeze came from the south,
 In the jungle wild cocks started crowing loudly,
 Their crows were answered by the cries of
 peacocks,
 As if these birds were greeting the sultan.
 When a cloud covered the edge of the moon,
 Making it similar to the face of a maiden,
 Bashfully watching her loved one,
 The queen gave birth to a daughter.
 The sultan's spouse gave birth to a daughter,
 Whose beautiful face matched that of
 Mandudari;¹⁸
 The queen was suffering greatly in labour,
 And the sultan held her head on his lap.
 Their baby, the girl of shining complexion,
 Was equal in beauty to a golden doll.¹⁹

These episodes are followed by an extensive section, which is different in each of the two works. In *Hikayat Bakhtiar* this is a series of stories told by the protagonist. In *Syair Bidasari* this section represents a variant of the plot about the "sleeping beauty", which is complicated by the well-known motif of the soul hidden outside the body. On learning of Lelasari's cruelty, the king, who meanwhile has fallen in love with Bidasari, takes away the fish of gold from the queen and, therefore, wakes up the "sleeping beauty".

Interestingly, story 5 of the “short recension” of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* tells of a spoilt and wilful queen, who wishes to revive her fish of gold and to force it to do various tricks (Djamaris, 1978: 71-73). This story resembles to some degree the story which Bidasari tells Lelasari.²⁰ After these different sections, we find the above-mentioned dénouement of the *hikayat* and the *syair*, which is again similar in the tale and in the poem.

To sum up, it is as if *Hikayat Bakhtiar* and *Syair Bidasari* show the male and the female versions of the plot about the protagonist endowed with the highest merit of his/her sex, who is victimised by envious foes and who in the finale reveals his/her real identity and triumphs over the persecutors. With the help of allusions to the motifs and patterns of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, well rooted in the intertext of Malay literature, the author of *Syair Bidasari* manages to express the message of his work in sharper relief.

CONCLUSION

Basing on the idea of two forms of existence of literary works, “lighted” and “shaded”, we have traced diverse metamorphoses of the Persian tale of Bakhtiyar in traditional Malay literature over several centuries. In the course of the research we managed to establish how complex relations between “literatures-that-give” and “literatures-that-take” could have been and, even more importantly, how self-conscious and creative Malay literature was in its choice from a broad range of foreign “offerings” and subsequent adaptation, transformation and indigenization of what was appropriated. The Malay tale of Bakhtiyar is a particularly appropriate example for examining these issues. On the one hand, its Persian original is identifiable, which cannot be said of many other translated compositions. This is Bakhtiyar-nama dated from the second half of the sixteenth century and quite popular in Islamic India. On the other hand, *Hikayat Bakhtiar* reveals all the stages of the appropriation and indigenization of a foreign text within the Malay context.

The first stage of these processes is represented by the Malay translation of Bakhtiyar-nama, usually designated as its “Persian recension”. This translation, relatively accurate though not lacking in specifically local features, most probably dates around the early seventeenth century. The second stage extends to the mid- and the late-seventeenth century. In this period the “Persian recension” inspired the creation of the “short” and “long” recensions of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (“pseudo-*Hikayat Bakhtiar*”), radically different not only from the “Persian recension” but also from one another. Even though the major motifs of their framing tales show a degree of similarity, each of

these recensions is completely specific in number (from 4 or 5 to 105) and content of the inserted stories told by Bakhtiar. Over the third stage covering the late seventeenth–the eighteenth century, the motifs from all the framing tales and inserted stories of *Hikayat Bakhtiar*'s recensions form together a specific segment within the intertext of traditional Malay literature, while still preserving a certain Persian aura. This segment is to provide later Malay writers with “building blocks” for the composition of new literary pieces, such as *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* and *Syair Bidasari*, which have even less to do with the original Bakhtiar tale than the recensions of “pseudo-Hikayat Bakhtiar”. Yet, in their works, the later writers not only reproduce and recombine the narrative and descriptive motifs drawn from their constellation in *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (now destructuralized), but also enhance the message of their own pieces by making allusions to the ideas expressed through relevant motifs in this *hikayat*.

Returning to the metaphor with which this paper has begun, we can say that if the first and partly the second stage in the appropriation and indigenization of the Bakhtiyar-nama are associated with the existence of a literary work “in the broad daylight”, the third stage of these processes is undoubtedly connected with the “shaded” form of its existence.

NOTES

1. In this paper I used (and reworked) some material from my earlier article about Persian stories in traditional Malay literature, broader in coverage and written in Indonesian, see. Braginsky 2009.
2. The manuscript (dated H 1264/5 = AD 1847/8) of the work by Daqa'iqi was found and published in 1966 by the eminent Iranian scholar Z. Safa, whose conclusions are summarised in Osmanov's epilogue to his Russian translation of the work.
3. Ouseley's translation was first published in 1800. However its re-edition of 1883 is much better, as it was provided by Clouston with an extensive introduction and detailed commentaries in which the translation of many passages, omitted in Ouseley's book of 1800, can be found.
4. For more details on the tale of Bakhtiyar in Persian and other literatures, see Horovitz and Masse, 1960, Hanaway, 1989 (and bibliographies in these articles).
5. Recently the conclusions of Brandes and Voorhoeve have been summarized and somewhat supplemented by Gorjaeva (1990).
6. In Leiden MS Cod.Or. 6069 and in Gonggrijp's *Kalila dan Damina* edition the story of the queen and her son from Bakhtiyar-name is replaced by apparently Malay story of the love of a hornbill for a sparrow, hence 7a in both cases.
7. India Office MS 797, 26 contains the frame-story of Bakhtiyar-name; 797, 36-43 contains inserted stories of this piece (Ethe, 1903-37, I:col. 525-526). For St. Petersburg manuscripts, see Tumanovich 1981:31, 57, 107-109, 111-12; for Leiden manuscripts, see

- Iskandar, 1999, I:106-08, 294-95, 642-43.
8. *Hikayat Ghulam* from Jakarta MS Ml.555 (former v.d.W.132) was published by Nikmah A. Sunardjo (1978). Although the content of stories in *Hikayat Ghulam* (like in Arabic tales of Bakhtiar generally) is, by and large, not unlike their content in the popular Persian version, these stories differ considerably from the Persian ones (and, consequently, from their Malay translation) in many important details and particularly in their succession, which is typically Arabic (*cf.* Gorიაeva, 1990:149, Table 1).
 9. These stories are: (1) The story of a fowler who gave the ruler a magical bird as a gift and who was persecuted by the vizier Muhammad Jalus, who sets him difficult tasks, and whom the fowler defeats with the help of a clever sheikh; (2) The story of a fisherman who received a magic monkey from the Chinese emperor and became a king; (3) The story of a merchant Hasan whom the insidious vizier Abu Fazl wanted to destroy and the merchant's wise wife Siti Dinar who arranged the vizier's execution artfully; (4) The story of a king who fled from his palace to avoid a feud, was separated from his children whom he had nearly executed on a calumny, which was prevented by the keepers of the city gates: [(5) The story of a queen and her golden fish]. For the edition of the "short recension", see Von Dewall, 1880, Djamaris, 1978, for a fairly detailed summary of its inserted stories, see Winstedt, 1991:88-89.
 10. The story about the fowler, the story about a merchant and his wise wife Siti Dinar.
 11. On the basis of the Kelantan MS of the "long recension" of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (see Baharudin, 1963:vii-viii) and its Brandes's (Jakarta Br. 121) and Raffles's (R.A.S. Raffles 63) fragments (see Van Ronkel, 1909:84-85, Ricklefs and Voorhoeve 1977:141, Brandes 1895, 1899), L. Gorიაeva has reconstructed the content and succession of 72 stories and identified sources of a great number of them (mainly from the data in Brandes 1895). The outcome of her study is presented in the article Gorიაeva 1990:149-52, in the form of a table which is too long to be quoted here. However, the study of *Bustan al-Salatin* by Jelani Harun (2009), particularly his table of stories from this work, that occur in the "long recension" of *Hikayat Bakhtiar* (pp.213-15), and his detailed summary of *Bustan al-Salatin*, books 3-7 (pp. 289-326), allows us to supplement Gorიაeva's table with a number of references to their sources. Stories from Gorიაeva's table No 13, 14, 15, 17, 25, 26, 46, 54, 58, 59, 61, 65, 67, 69 originate from *Bustan al-Salatin*. At the same time many stories attributed to *Taj al-Salatin* may also originate from *Bustan al-Salatin*, as, firstly, al-Raniri used *Taj al-Salatin* (e.g., the story of a poor Zoroastrian, his wife and a cruel king may have been borrowed from that work) and, secondly, *Nasihah al-Muluk* was a common source of the two compositions. As some stories from *Taj al-Salatin* are difficult to distinguish from those from *Bustan al-Salatin*, we quote only the general number of stories from the two books. Besides, the story of *Kohar Malikun* (Gorიაeva's table, No 9), i.e., of Johar Maligan = *Jauhar Manikam* (De Hollander 1845), was probably borrowed from *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, as some MSS of this work include it (Jakarta Br. 102, see Van Ronkel, 1909:81-82).
 12. For the arguments in favour of the assumption that the story from *Hikayat Bakhtiar* rather than that from *Hikayat Maharaja Puspa Wiraja* was used in this case, see Braginsky 2004:407-08, 315-16.
 13. She swears that she will commit suicide if Raja Serdala touches her.
 14. The present author is grateful to Dr. Jelani Harun who kindly familiarised him with his transliteration of this story from the *Bustan al-Salatin*, based on the manuscripts:

- Klinkert 14 (Leiden) and University of Malaya 41 (Kuala Lumpur).
15. *Cassia fistula*.
 16. Text: teja; in fact, the yellow glow of sunset, Wilkinson, 1932, II:549.
 17. The original Malay text: "*Maka baginda pun memimpin tangan isterinya dibawa berjalan perlahan-lahan sampai selangkah dua langkah berhenti pula. Maka dikerasi juga oleh baginda dibawanya berjalan. Maka beberapa antaranya ia berjalan itu maka sampailah kepada suatu wilahar; tiada berapa besar, adalah seperti kubang yang besar tetapi airnya terlalu sangat permainya dan serta jernihnya. Maka ada seponon kayu terlalu sangat rendang [...] hampir kepada wilahar itu dan di bawah kayu itu ada suatu batu [...]. Maka Raja Turkisna laki-isteri itupun berhentilah di bawah pohon kayu itu serta ia duduk di atas batu itu [...] Sebermula malam itu bulan pun terang seperti siang [...] Maka perutnya makin sangat sakitnya, selaku akan berputeralah. Maka baginda pun terlalu sangat masyghulnya akan isterinya hendak berputera itu [...] Maka diribanya kepala isterinya [...]. Hampir akan dinihari dan angin pun bertiuplah sepoi-sepoi bahasa dan hayam hutan pun berkokok terlalu ramai bersahut-sahutan dan bercampur dengan burung merak berbunyi pada pohon kayu beraksa itu seperti orang menegur akan permaisuri. [...] Maka teja pun membarislah di sisi langit dan mega pun tampaklah beranyutan ke sana dan kemari dipuput bayu itu. Maka permaisuri pun berputeralah seorang laki-laki terlalu sekali baik rupa parasnya, bercahaya rupanya gilang-gemilang seperti emas baru disepuh rupanya"* (Baharudin, 1963:122-25).
 18. Mother of Seri Rama, an epitome of womanly beauty in Malay literature.
 19. The original Malay text: "*Berjalanlah baginda laki isteri, / Sambil baginda mimpin puteri, / Tepi sungai juga hendak dicahari, / Dua tiga langkah singgah berdiri. // Setelah baginda sampai ke pantai, / Dilihatnya perahu di atas lantai, / Lengkaplah sekalian kajang dan lantai, / Baiklah puteri duduk berjuntai. // Bulan pun sedang purnama raya, / Terang cuaca sangat bercahaya, / Puteri nan sakit tiada berdaya, / Baginda pun belas memandang dia. // Paras bulan empat belas hari, / Pukul tiga dini hari, / Jam-jam durja berseri-seri, / Baginda pun sangat belaskan puteri. // Sepoi-sepoi angin selatan, / Berkokoklah ramai ayam di hutan, / Dengan merak bersahut-sahutan, / Seperti mengalu-alukan sultan. // Bulanpun sebelah disaput awan, / Seperti muka anak perawan, / Mengintai kekasihnya malu-maluan, / Bersalinlah puteri seorang perempuan. / Bersalinlah adinda seorang puteri, / Parasnya laksana Mandudari, / Sakitnya tiada lagi terperi, / Diriba baginda kepala isteri"* (Hoëvell, 1843:3).
 20. Although this similarity is rather superficial, the images of the spoilt and wilful queen, the light-minded king, who only likes to get presents and despises everyone who does not bring them to him, and the fish of gold, in which the soul may reside, could have been a source of inspiration for the author of *Syair Bidasari*. Be that as it may, the queen in story 5 from *Hikayat Bakhtiar* is a kind of cross between Lelasari and Bidasari, as, on the one hand, she is spoilt and demands that all her wishes should be fulfilled immediately and, on the other hand, she wants the king to be surrounded by beautiful people (something absolutely unbearable for Lelasari) and is ready to take care of his good name. Or rather, she is reminiscent of repented and reformed Lelasari from the last pages of the poem.

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